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Hebels home

A
R H A P S O D Y
O N
A N T I Q U E R I N G S

W R I T T E N
I N R O M E. *L*

1780.

Adamas notissimus & Berenices
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*Supposed to be by
Thrusham & Wiffenley*



A R H A P S O D Y

O N

ANTIQUE RINGS.

O For an Arm to snatch the Flame divine ! --
 Thy theft Prometheus, not thy lot be mine .
 Could my weak Brain , but like a *Cava* yield
 Thoughts pure as Fragments, which emblaze the Field :
 And ev'ry Thought display an Antique Gem ; 5
 B*r*s would ^{approve} praise, nor J**k*ns dare condemn .

Hail bright INTAGLIOS ! sacred held by You ,
 Ye grand dispensers of Antique Virtù :
 Hail proud CAMMEOS ! with such fervor fought ,
 So highly Valued, and so dearly Bought . 10
 All hail ! ye gold , ye bronze, ye iron Rings !
 The boast of Knights, of Senators, and Kings .
 Ye are my Theme , to you the pow'rs belong ;
 To raise a Fortune , or inspire a Song ;

A 2

To

To wake the Fancy, Dulness to restrain, 15
Impress a Taste, where Nature, tried in vain:

To join in Wedlock---soft, nor fondly stray
On this alluring, but unclassick way:

For Yokes, not Rings, were used in times of old,
And Love, and Faith, and ev'ry thing but Gold. - 20

HANS CARVELL's Ring, (how e'er it seem, a Jest,)
By me was ever own'd, the first, the best,
The most Antique; for Antiquarians trace,
Intaglios rose, with Egypts rising race:

But this, long ere their sacred Types began, 25
Was pride of Females, and was worn by Man.

O! holy relick, and true Gusto's pride!
Heroes for thee, have bravely liv'd and died;
Enflam'd by Thee how glows the Patriot Breast;
Thy beauty lulls the Tyrant's soul to rest; 30
Thy latent magick--Gods! thy potent charms
Impell the Youth, and rouse e'en Age to Arms!
Rich in thyself, our weaker praise You scorn;
And solace half the World, and half adorn.

But other Gems demand applauding lays, 35
Gems of more price, in these *Gusto* days;

Gems

Gems oriental, sculptur'd too, and rare,
Which T-ly-s self, without offence might wear.

Let Envy say, When fought at huge Expence,
Rings grace the Finger, and reproach the Sense: 40
How weak her arrows Roman Spoils proclaim
Where Punic honours live on Canne's plain.
Let modern Art, still emulate the Greek;
We buy Etruscan, when 'tis prov'd Antique;
Let modern Artists with Etruscan vie, 45
Their Grecian manner gives the work the lie.
But Antique graving, what a mine of Taste!
To know a Gem, Cammeo, or a Paste;
To judge the Grecian, from the Roman school;
And name precisely an Etruscan tool: 50
O! tis too much for human sense to bear,
Methinks I mount, I fly, I float on air! ---
TOWNLEY be thine, with Critick eye to trace,
The hand of Phidias, on the Parian face;
To seek, to feel, and with a Soul thine own. 55
Doat on the beauties of a breathing Stone!
Be Yours discernment, and a judgment chaste
To You be all the massive load of Taste.

Our

Our search minuter is; no less profound;
 With anxious Hope we tread the Classick ground; 60
 Unlike the foolish harbinger of Morn,
 We for a Gem, bestow whole fields of Corn:
 And such the Ardour of a *Symbol* Taste,
 Behold our Woodmen lay whole forests waste.
Multum in parvo, be our dulcet Song, 65
Multum in parvo, shout the festive Throng:
 And now we carol forth in praise of Rings,
 And raise their Fame, beyond sublunar things;
 Let antique Statues, shroud their heads for shame,
 And Canvass silent, breathe no Author's name; 70
 Let Sons of Fortune, bless these halcyon Days,
 And Antiquarians strew our paths with Bays,
 While Painting boasts her birth from Loves soft Fire;
 And Sculpture owns a Potter for her Sire;
 Rings, mystick Rings, claim origin divine,
 They scorn Loves fire, condemn a mortal line; 75
 Jove gave them birth, when with benign command,
 He graced Prometheus, thy too daring hand:
 Rude the materials, and the setting plain;
 Just emblem of thy former Couch and Chain.

But

But rich the gift, the giver, and the end; 80
 Joves nod revok'd not, yet enlarg'd his Friend:
 And sure so pleasing, so sublime a thing,
 So form'd to charm, from Jove alone could spring.

What funds of Learning are in Rings inshrin'd!
 How well adapted to dilate the Mind! 85
 Tho small their circle, yet in them we see,
 The classick symbol of Eternity! --

Still other wonders Antique Rings disclose!
 Give ear ye Fair, for once attend ye Beaus;
 No mean concern your treasured hours demand, 90
 Our Theme is Rings, and Rings adorn the Hand.

In vain the tract of Euclid ye pursue,
 To form the Nails in segments, strictly true;
 In vain the nightly glove and bathing art,
 To yeild a softness, or a Grace impart; 95
 In vain You boast a skin divinely bright,
 If Modesty conceal the Hands from sight:

I knew a Fair, (Be still my wounded heart!)
 Whose graceful form, nor sought, nor needed Art;
 Bright as the Sea born, ever smiling Queen, 100
 Unworship'd die---the Cause--she liv'd unseen.

Ah

Ah gentle Maids would You the heart surprife,
 Display Your Rings, more pow'rful than your Eyes:
 And what are Hands? -- their charms no more we fing.
 All figh to touch the dear deluding RING. 105
 I've feen an empty Coxcomb, grace the board,
 And share the Smiles of fome protecting Lord;
 His mind ungarnish'd, and his only care,
 T'adjust the Sword, the Bag, and Solitare:
 Whilst blushing Merit, when he dar'd t'aspire, 110
 Felt all the Hardships of a mean Attire;
 And Crown'd with Talents, to adorn our Race,
 To well drefs'd Dulnefs, yield with grief his place.
 So hands undeck'd with Greek, or Roman spoil,
 Not mark'd by trophies of the Gold-smiths toil, 115
 Muft fad retiring, nakednefs to hide,
 Or feek the Bosom, or in Pockets glide. -

Happy our fons! to live in times like thefe,
 When Taftes meanders are explor'd with eafe;
 When feeds of Gufto, ne'er fo slightly fown, 120
 In ROME's rich hot Bed, instantly are blown.
 In days remote, wen flying blifsful plains,
 And Albion's shore, where native Virtue reigns:

Wam'd

Warm'd with the Classick, with the Muse's fire,
 And rous'd by budding Hope, or young Desire; 125
 Alike we soar'd, imbrac'd th'inviting Gale,
 And skim'd the Alps---to doze in Arnos Vale:
 With holy wonder gazed on dawning Art,
 And slaves to feeling, Painting won the Heart:
 With awful steps o'er hallow'd ground we tread, 130
 Where lives great Angelo! where sleep the Dead;
 We bless our Eyes, then grieve for barren Home,
 And scarce awake, arrive fatigued at Rome.
 Rome! wond'rous Rome, of Empire once the seat,
 And now in Ruin venerably Great: 135
 Here Art mature the manly Robe assumes;
 And lives, and moves, and speaks in Raphael's Rooms:
 Here Art---but why the irksome Tale renew,
 Or why expose each rigid Task to view,
 Or all the raptures rival Works inspir'd, 140
 How Canvass warm'd, or how the Marble fir'd?
 For, haply, now these Toils have ta'en their flight,
 TASTE's yoke is easy, and her burden light.
 To Rings this good, to Rings this ease we owe,
 From Rings pure rapture, polish'd Gusto flow; 145

Intaglios seal a DILETTANTE's fame,
And rich Cammeos write in gold the Name. —

How great the Men ! how much beyond our laud,
Whon Nature form'd, to stamp our Taste abroad !
Rich in Apollo's gifts, their early Days, 150
Were mark'd by Genius, and were crown'd with praise;
Nay in the Cradle; Science wreath'd each head,
The Graces rock'd them, blue ey'd Pallas fed,
Fair Metis with rich Pap was ever nigh,
And Muses sooth'd, with Songs of Lullaby. 155
Yet these (O , modest souls !) have quit a Name;
And self denying , fled from deathless Fame .
For what ? for us , the sacred Arts they leave ,
Least in their Death, sound Taste should find her grave .
The Gods, in pity to mankind , have crown'd 160
Their gen'rous purpose---Lo ! a Charm is found,
True Taste's Elixir, and procured with ease ,
Sold at their SHOPS, and at the GENOESE.

Untravell'd Wits may doubt, and Fools may stare;
Are there not Unguents to increase the hair? 165
Are there not words (as pious legends tell ;)
To chase , and chain down wicked Sprites to Hell:
To

To banish Robin and his sportive band,
 To distant Seas, or foreign Fairy Land?
 And in our days have med'cines not been found, 170
 To raise from Death to Life, the hang'd or drow'nd?
 The Phocian Tyrant with a Taste sublime,
 Was blest'd with Rings, which taught him to divine:
 The Carthage Hero, (like a Stoic brave,)
 Wore in his Ring, a passport to the Grave; 175
 Experience stamps a Faith in other things;
 Then why this Wonder, why this Doubt of Rings?
 Yet more, Would Chiefs, on Tyber's banks grown gray;
 Forfake Truths path, for an erroneous Way?
 Would men replete in all the Schools of Art; 180
 Who know VASARI's lives, almost by heart:
 Who long on Grecian forms, have richly fed;
 And deep in WINCKELMAN, are learn'dly read:
 Whose Mind's enlarg'd Taste's utmost verge to span;
 And judge a PHOCION, or a lady's FAN: 185
 Would these, (I say,) an Anti-Gusto preach?
 Tutor'd in Rome, unclassick Doctrines teach?
 Would these false Nostrums vend for Worlds, to Youth?
 Forbid it Honour, and forbid it Truth.

See with what study o'er a Gem they pry; 190
 See the wrapt soul, come rushing to the Eye;
 The Nerve oppress'd, but ill sustains her part,
 And drown'd in Joy, demands the aid of Art:
 Art lends her aid, behold new beauties rise,
 An ample Shield, a giant Gem we prize; 195
 Here Grecian Stile, and Grecian Airs are found,
 Here Grace, expression, energy abound;
 Here Dioscorodes, with Nature strives;
 Here youthful Ammon spight of Time survives;
 This Gem Hephestion from Statira won: 200
 And this adorn'd great Phillip's Godlike son! --

Happy ITALIA! whose Historick plains,
 Are rich to us, tho' barren to the Swains:
 Thy Womb exhausted in some steril hour,
 May spurn the Mattock, and the Digger's pow'r; 205
 Thy Genii J*k*s, point in vain the ground,
 Dig, and re-dig, no more Antiques are found:
 " Dismal to hear, and terrible to tell; "
 To Rings, to Taste, to Gain, a long farewell!
 And B*r*s, thou, in some portentous Night, 210
 When Dreams of Rivals, or of Ghosts affright;

Like Brutus, starting--hear the solemn sound !
 ' Henceforth no more Cammeos shall be found .
 O fearful Night ! a Night indeed of fear ,
 E'en N*t*n trembles, while the Spectre's near: 215
 Again it Speaks--"I could a tale unfold,
 " Whose lightest Word" would blast the Hope of Gold:
 ' Your Pupils now , are doom'd fans Taste to mourn ,
 ' For ah ! no more the Ring Antique is worn :
 ' From tortur'd Vine-yards, Gems no more shall rise; 220
 ' No more Intaglios blefs desiring Eyes :
 ' VESTA no more her wounded sides deplore ;
 ' Nor Grecian fragments , Roman skill restore ! --
 O ! my prophetick soul ! does Fancy rave ,
 Or do I really see the yawning Grave , 225
 And hear those melancholy Accents flow ,
 Fraught with the presage of eternal Woe ?
 Should th' angry Fates , their dire resolves expound ;
 And Taste for Rings, receive a mortal wound ;
 ROME clad in Sack cloth , loudly shall complain , 230
 And dread a Gothick , dread a Lombard reign :
 The ANTIQUARIANS , madly howl their Fears ,
 And swoln with Sorrow , flood each Urn with Tears !
 Such

Such Tears as all the Brave , the Worthy Shed ,
 On that sad Day ! (I won't say BRITONS fled ,) 235
 When KEPPLE burn'd , our hostile Toil to end ;
 And lost a VICTORY , to save a FRIEND ! --

Come British Youth , while yet their lives a Hope ,
 Banquet on Taste , und give the Fancy scope ;
 Fly British Youth , nor heed your Country's claim , 240
 Nor seek the Patriot , nor the Heroe's Name ,
 Forsake Bellona's drear , and direful waste !

Nor think of Laurels , till you grasp at Taste :
 A Ring bestows it , (mind the Ring be Greek ,)
 And largely spend , and Fame shall largely speak . 245

Thrice happy They ! enjoin^yg here the pow'r ,
 To snatch the Treasures of the present Hour ;
 Who wisely think , how fleeting Temp'ral Things ,
 And ere they vanish , stock them selves with RINGS .

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F I N I S .

